

How to eat healthy

Eating right is important, because nutrition plays a big part in your overall health. For example, a healthy diet can lessen your risk of certain cancers, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

So what is a healthy diet? In a nutshell (no pun intended), it includes lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and beans, as well as some calcium-rich dairy products and healthy protein such as poultry, fish, eggs, or tofu.

To help you make healthier daily food choices, we've put together a few easy-to-remember mealtime strategies. Take a minute to read the simple tips below, then log in to Healthy Lifestyle Rewards at blueshieldca.com/hlr, click on *Health Programs*, and select *Nutrition* to find tools and information to help you eat well. Plus you can find more resources by selecting *Health Tools*, then choosing *Quizzes and Calculators*.

Tips for healthy eating

Add color. A vegetable's color signals the vitamins and minerals it contains. To get a wide range of nutrients, try to eat lots of different colored vegetables daily. Salads are great for this of course, but you can toss some veggies into almost any dish, from scrambled eggs to pasta to meatloaf.

Separate your plate. Before you eat, mentally divide your plate into four equal parts. Then fill two with vegetables, use one for starchy foods (like potatoes, beans, rice or pasta), and one for a serving of lean meat, fish, or a meat substitute (such as eggs, cheese, or tofu). Just don't use a big platter-size plate, or you may pile on too much food.

Know portion size. If you think a cereal bowl full of your favorite chocolate chip ice cream equals one serving, you may need some help estimating portion sizes (sorry). Here are some easy ways to measure single servings:

- 1 cup salad greens = a fist
- ½ cup cooked rice, pasta or potato = ½ baseball
- 3 oz. meat = deck of cards
- 3 oz. grilled/baked fish = checkbook
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter = ping pong ball
- ¼ cup nuts or raisins = an egg
- 1 teaspoon butter = a sugar cube

Eat your veggies first. If you're absolutely starving at meal time, start with some vegetables or salad. This will ease your hunger and help keep you from overloading on meat or starchy foods.

Head off temptation. If the cookie jar is the first thing you see when you walk into your kitchen, you're asking for trouble. Instead move the cookies, ice cream, chips, etc. where you can't see them, like a high shelf or the back of the freezer.

Avoid processed foods. Stay away from foods that are highly processed and contain added sugars like corn syrup. Hint: Check the ingredients on the label. If there's a long list of unidentifiable chemicals, don't eat it.

Drink healthy, too. Want a beverage to go with your healthy meal? Choose water rather than soda or juice, which is high in calories and less nutritious than a piece of fruit.

Healthy Lifestyle Rewards

You can find lots more resources for healthy eating at Healthy Lifestyle Rewards, an online program that helps you take steps toward living a healthy lifestyle.

Personalized tools and programs can help you eat better, exercise regularly, quit smoking and more – all things that help keep you feeling good. Just log in once a week, use the tools and programs, and begin reaping the rewards of a healthy lifestyle.

To get started today, register at blueshieldca.com/hlr. To find tools to help you eat well, log in and click on *Health Programs*, then select *Nutrition*; or select *Health Tools*, then click on *Quizzes and Calculators*.

More online resources

Detailed nutrition guidance from the Harvard School of Public Health:
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource>

Tips on how to add more fruits and vegetables to your daily diet, plus tools to help you calculate how many servings you need:
www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Guidance to help you choose the healthiest dishes at different types of restaurants: www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=531